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world; but this is evidently from some failure of nutrition, for when it is served with its own pollen, or the pollen of other plants or other species, it is alike barren.

At pages 412, 413 in the *Proceedings of the Academy* for 1875, he had called attention to the fact that in many species of lily, where the flower is cernuous, the point of bending straightened after fertilization; and the ovarium, pendulous in flower, became erect. There are some in which the flowers are always erect, and they seem to be just as successful in their several economies, as those that are at first cernuous, and afterward erect. At that time, with this reflection, it seemed to him reasonable to suppose that the bending down of the flowers in some species was not a matter of choice with the flower—if one might metaphorically use this expression—but was the result of a curving of the stem made for some other reason in plant economy than for good to the flower or its special objects alone. But here were some specimens of *Lilium tigrinum* that had blown over when young. The pedicles from these stems went straight down towards the earth and bore the expanded flower without the slightest curve. The flowers on the erect stems are all on recurved pedicels. Though we are still without light as to what advantage the recurved forms gain over the erect ones, this little incident teaches us, at least, that it is the flower that demands the curve, and not a case of a curve demanding a pendulous flower.

*Fishing Lines and Ligatures from the Silk-glands of Lepidopterous Larvæ.*—A communication was received from Miss ADELE M. FIELDE, stating that in the locality from which she wrote, Swatow, China, the silk-glands are taken from the larvæ of several species of large lepidopterous insects just before they enter the pupa stage, and are made into fishing lines. At this period in the life-history of the insect, the glands are full of the viscid white substance from which the cocoon is to be spun. The silk-glands of a species of *Atlas* were found to be one yard long, a tenth of an inch in diameter at the free, posterior end, and a hundredth of an inch in diameter at its anterior end. The two glands extend nearly the whole length of the body cavity, on either side of the alimentary canal, lying in loops of varying length, and uniting in a single duct under the mouth, as in the silk-worm, *Bombyx mori*. The Chinese make a transverse cut across the back of the caterpillar, take hold of one of the loops of the silk-gland, draw it out entire, drop it in vinegar to take off its external coat, then stretch it to double or treble its original length, and dry it. A durable filament is thus formed, strong as catgut, and much cheaper. The tenacity of the filament is constantly restored by soaking it for a few minutes in warm rice-water, that is, in the water in which rice has been boiled for food. The fishermen say that when thus prepared a line will hold the largest fish taken on the coast. It was found, however, that a single filament would not sustain more than four and a half pounds. Dr. Causland, in charge of the Hospital in the English Presbyterian Mission at Swatow, had successfully used these filaments for tying arteries in surgical operations. It was suggested that the cocoon-spinning lepidoptera of the United States might furnish in their silk-glands, for the joining of wounds, a thread which would have all the virtues of spun silk, without its objectionable traits. Silk-worms have been successfully reared in the neighborhood of Swatow, on lettuce, the silk from such caterpillars being coarser than that from those fed on mulberry leaves.

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### AUGUST 17.

Mr. CHARLES MORRIS in the chair.

Twelve persons present.

*On the Effect of Scorpion Stings.*—The following communication was read from Mr. EDW. H. THOMPSON, United States Consul at Merida, Province of Yucatan:—

"I am advised of an interesting letter from Dr. Gonzalez, of Durango, read by Dr. Leidy before the Academy, in which mention was made of the extremely venomous character of the Mexican Scorpion.

"I would state that while many cases of scorpion stings have occurred within the range of my personal observation, I have yet to record one that has even approached a fatal termination. During the month of January last, while exploring some of the ruined cities of the interior, two of my men, native Mayas, were stung by scorpions dislodged from the ruined walls, one receiving a sting upon his shoulder, while the other was punctured directly upon his naked back, and very close to the spine.

"The man receiving the sting upon his shoulder was soon relieved by a few applications of strong ammonia. The other complained for some time of a numbness almost approaching paralysis. This feeling, however, was not sufficient to prevent him from keeping upon his horse. After I had applied the ammonia, and when at the end of a hard day's ride we dismounted, he had practically recovered.

"Of thirteen cases noted by me within a short while, but two were of a serious nature. One was the case of my native boy, and the other was that of a young Englishman who, stung upon the thumb, remained in an almost paralyzed state for several hours, eventually recovering. It may be well to state, in relation